United Nations A/60/84

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 June 2005
English
Original: French

Sixtieth session
Item 58 (a) of the preliminary list*
Eradication of poverty and other development issues: implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)

Note verbale dated 9 June 2005 from the Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit herewith the Plan of Action for promotion of employment and poverty alleviation adopted at the extraordinary session of the African Union on employment and poverty alleviation, held at Ouagadougou from 3 to 9 September 2004 (see annex).

The Permanent Mission would be grateful if the Secretary-General would have this note and its annex issued as a document of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, under item 58 (a) of the preliminary list.

* A/60/50 and Corr.1.

05-38479 (E) 220605 050705

Annex to the note verbale dated 9 June 2005 from the Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

PLAN OF ACTION FOR PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

1. INTRODUCTION

This Plan of Action articulates the commitments made in the Declaration on Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation. Member States are called upon to utilize the Plan of Action to develop and implement their own short, medium and long-term National Action Plans to create jobs and eradicate poverty in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

The Plan of Action should also serve as a vehicle for implementing various Declarations and commitments made by Heads of State and Government. It provides guidelines and key objectives for Member States to formulate their own mechanisms based on their national needs.

The Mechanism for Implementation, Follow-up and Evaluation will ensure that the Plan of Action is implemented in a sustainable manner, that actions are well coordinated, and that follow-up and evaluation are sustained.

1.1 Fundamental Objectives

The primary goal of this Plan of Action is to reverse the current trends of pervasive and persistent poverty, unemployment and under-employment on the continent; and to have tangible improvement in the living standards of the people and their families at the national and community levels in Africa. Accordingly the following are the key priority areas.

1.2 Key Priority Areas

1. Ensuring political leadership and commitment to create an enabling environment of good governance for investment, development and poverty alleviation in the context of NEPAD and the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

2. Promotion of the agricultural sector and rural development, sustainable management of the environment for food security and development of support infrastructure;

3. Development of an appropriate framework for integration and harmonization of economic and social policies;

4. Improving and strengthening the existing social protection schemes and extending it to workers and their families currently excluded, as well as occupational safety, health and hygiene;
5. Empowerment of women by integrating them in the labour markets and to enable them to participate effectively in the development of poverty reduction strategies, policies and programmes;

6. Human and institutional capacity building for public and private institutions in charge of employment promotion and poverty alleviation, including the social partners and other relevant actors of the civil society;

7. Utilising key sectors with high employment potential to generate more jobs and allocate adequate resources for that purpose

8. Building International cooperation, fair and equitable globalisation, and partnerships for an enhanced international support to Africa's efforts towards achieving sustainable development, putting emphasis on the employment agenda, poverty alleviation, regional integration and a better participation in the globalization process;

9. To promote regional and economic cooperation among the Regional Economic Communities RECs in order to expand the economic space, intra and inter-regional trade, markets and exploit the economies of scale:

10. Targeting and empowering vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, aged persons, migrants, children, youth and people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases, internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants and the working poor;

11. Mobilization of resources at national, regional and international levels.

2. PLAN OF ACTION

The Plan of Action concentrates on key priority areas. Each priority area is outlined below with an objective, strategies and recommended actions.

2.1 Priority Area

Ensuring political leadership and commitment to create an enabling environment of good governance for investment, development and poverty alleviation in the context of NEPAD and the attainment of MDGs.

Objective

Enhancing leadership at all levels to mobilise resources and all stakeholders for poverty alleviation.

Strategies

i. Put employment at the centre of PRSPs and other national poverty reduction programmes, national development plans, NEPAD's priorities, RECs' programmes, and bilateral/multilateral development cooperation policies and programmes as well as MDGs;

ii. Organize National Consultation on Employment and Poverty among all stakeholders to review and/or develop Plan of Action for Employment creation and Poverty Alleviation in line with Commitments and Decision of the AU Extraordinary Summit;

iii. Increase the domestic mobilisation of all relevant actors and key stakeholders at the local, national, regional and continental levels to prioritise employment creation in addressing the root causes of poverty;

iv. Increase the allocation and mobilisation of resources from domestic and external sources to invest in high potential employment creation sectors; and

v. Enhance political, economic and corporate governance.

Recommended Actions

i. Adapt the public institutions, particularly the Ministries and Agencies responsible for Employment and Poverty Alleviation;

ii. Promote entrepreneurship for vulnerable groups especially women and youth; and

iii. Encourage institutions such as NGOs and CBOs to build their capacity to effectively address the problems of unemployment.

2.2 Priority Area

Promotion of the agricultural sector and rural development, sustainable management of the environment for food security and development of support infrastructure.

Objective

To enhance development of the agricultural sector and conserve the environment for food security, and infrastructure development.

Strategies

i. Implementation of commitments undertaken under Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) such as 10% of national budget to be allocated to agriculture, market access, improving intra-African trade, and strategic crops;

ii. Diversification of agriculture production in general and particularly, food and cash crops, combating narcotics related crops, and encouraging environmental protection, rehabilitation and access to land;

iii. Encouraging the environmental education through formal and informal channels including extension methods;

iv. Conserving and channeling water with a view to expanding the irrigated areas for crop and animal husbandry;

v. Preventing soil erosion by terracing afforestation and discouraging deforestation;

vi. Encourage the participation of the youth in agriculture in order to reduce rural-urban migration and promote agriculture cooperatives;

vii. Encourage the processing of raw materials to increase value-addition in exports;

viii. Encourage the development of micro-financing in rural and urban areas; and

ix. Encourage the establishment of Agriculture Commodity Exchange at national, regional and continental level, including storage facility.

Recommended Actions

Support the implementation of the 2004 Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water as well as the recommended actions such as:

i. Evaluate the implementation of the African Regional Nutrition Strategy (1993-2003) and ensure that commitments made therein have been implemented effectively;

ii. Encourage the cultivation of cash crops as a means of income generation;

iii. Collect rain water, build dams and improve water conservation systems for irrigation and period of drought;

iv. Build capacity by education, training and re-training in soil conservation and in forestry;

v. Impart training in increased food production by extension methods as well as in nutritious food consumption;

vi. Improve the living standards of producers in the rural areas through the provision of adequate basic infrastructure such as electricity, good water supply, health care, education and other services.

vii. Promote research in agriculture, livestock, fisheries and agro-forestry; and

viii. Promote the production and marketing of safe sanitary products, fertilisers and integrated pest management.

2.3 Priority Area

Development of a framework for integration and harmonization of economic and social policies

Objective

To achieve an integrated and holistic approach in social and economic development in order to effectively contribute to employment creation and poverty alleviation.

Strategies

i. Creating an enabling regulatory environment to attract investments to productive sectors;

ii. Promoting coherence in policies and programmes at national level;

iii. Promoting and harmonising regional initiatives on poverty alleviation;

iv. Harmonising and coordinating labour legislation and investment codes in order to attract investors; and

v. Enhancing employment, especially of vulnerable groups through legislation and promotion of labour intensive projects, SMEs and micro-enterprises.

Recommended Actions

i. Development of a social policy framework for Africa;

ii. Promoting multi-sectoral structures; and

iii. Advocacy for employment promotion and poverty reduction through increased media coverage of issues of poverty and employment and special events/promotional activities targeted to the issue.

2.4 Priority Area

Establishing, improving and strengthening the social protection schemes and extending them to workers and their families currently excluded, as well as occupational safety, health and hygiene.

Objective

To establish, extend and enhance social safety-nets including social protection, occupational safety, health and hygiene for better working and living conditions for all men and women, in particular the most vulnerable including youth, women especially rural and, people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Other Related Infectious Diseases.

Strategies

i. Ensuring best working and living conditions of all men and women as a tangible aspect in the fight against poverty;

ii. Increasing productivity by improving safety, hygiene and health of workers; and

iii. Controlling trafficking in and use of illicit drugs and other psychotropic substances.

Recommended Actions

i. Provide affordable health care including through community-based health insurance schemes and strengthening viability of existing schemes;

ii. Provide occupational safety and health coverage to vulnerable workers especially in agriculture and the informal economy;

iii. Strengthen labour administration and inspectorate systems;

iv. Provide targeted social welfare programmes to benefit those in need;

v. Encourage and support the development of micro-insurance and innovative decentralized social security schemes to provide social protection through community or group support;

vi. Strengthen law enforcement against drug trafficking and abuse as well as treatment and rehabilitation of drug dependant persons; and

vii. Encourage the better sharing of productivity profits in order to increase employment creating investments and ensure better conditions for workers.

2.5 Priority Area

Empowerment of women by integrating them in the labour markets and to enable them to participate effectively in the development of poverty reduction strategies, policies and programmes.

Objective

To mainstream gender issues into all poverty reduction and employment promotion policies and programmes by investing in human capital development, especially young women and men.

Strategies

i. Investing and empowering young women and men by harnessing their creativity and entrepreneurship skills, developing education and training, and facilitating and expanding/encouraging productive employment opportunities and durable/sustained revenue generating activities in urban and rural sectors;

ii. Promoting equity and equality in opportunities, by increasing women's level of representation on social, economic and political decision making structures and processes;

iii. Promoting gainful employment for women using their entrepreneurial skills; and

iv. Promoting youth employment through their innovative skills.

Recommended Actions

i. Promote women's entrepreneurship through better training in basic business skills and improved access to market opportunities in non-traditional sectors and access to capital and skills development;

ii. Supporting an entrepreneurial culture which helps potential women entrepreneurs make better informed decisions and to organizes themselves as well as to engage in social dialogue;

iii. Assist exchange of information and facilitate learning on youth employment policies and initiatives and develop synergies for concrete results through the Youth Employment Network (YEN) and provide support to youth empowerment programmes;

iv. Advocate and implement legislation guaranteeing land rights for women, access to credit facilities, increasing their access to collateral capital, property and inheritance rights and access to extension services;

v. Develop active labour market policies and support institutions which can assist young new entrants into the labour market;

vi. Support the implementation of Decision EX/CL/117(V) and Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa adopted by the Fifth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the Third Ordinary

Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

vii. Promote the establishment of co-operatives and youth and women associations.

2.6 Priority Area

Human and institutional capacity building for public and private institutions in charge of employment creation and poverty alleviation, including the social partners and other relevant actors of the civil society;

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of local, national, regional and continental institutions in promoting participation, voice, tripartism, social dialogue and partnership to ensure an equitable and efficient representation of important socio-economic interests and beneficiaries in the formulation and implementation of inclusive development policies.

Strategies

i. Building institutional capacity in key ministries relevant to employment creation and fighting against poverty including Ministries of labour, local Authorities, as well as Employers', Workers and community based organizations;

ii. Establishing an institutional enabling environment;

iii. Setting up and continuously up-dating of national data base on employment and poverty;

iv. Enhancing capacity and local Government by decentralization in order to empower local administrations; and

v. Promote research, data collection and analysis of statistics on employment and poverty alleviation.

Recommended Actions

i. Involve employers' and workers' organisations and the private sector more closely in discussions on training policies and skills development;

ii. Promote lifelong learning, entrepreneurial and vocational training and youth employment;

iii. Assess capacity needs Review and/or develop and implement plans for strengthening stakeholders including Ministries of Labour, NGOs, Civil Society Organisations, as well as Employers and Workers' Organisations;

iv. Involve workers, employers, private sector and local communities in bringing about change, through social dialogue and supportive active labour market policies;

v. Encourage exchange of country experiences and best practices in the area of employment and poverty alleviation;

vi. Strengthen data collection and analysis as well as labour market information systems; and

vii. Encourage the incorporation of WHO Health personnel/population ratio as well as UNESCO teachers/students ratio at national level to create employment opportunities and to improve the social welfare of the population.

2.7 Priority Area

Utilizing key sectors with high employment potential to generate jobs and to allocate adequate resources

Objective

To provide an enabling environment to create productive and decent jobs.

Strategies

i. Promoting public and private sector reforms for employment creation;

ii. Promoting public works programmes in infrastructural development;

iii. Reorienting public sector investment and restructuring the industrial and agricultural sectors;

iv. Ensuring adequate incomes and labour standards for jobs creation;

v. Creating productive labour absorbing jobs through labour intensive approaches.

vi. Encourage the sharing and exchange of experiences and best practices among member states in the field of power generation, particularly by utilising sources of natural energy, such as solar energy and other renewable energy sources, that can generate employment opportunities;

vii. Upgrading the informal economy by developing support mechanisms through training and access to finance; and

viii. Encourage African investor and provide them with the necessary facilities, protection and conducive environment for the establishment of economic enterprises that will contribute to job creation and production.

Recommended Actions

i. Identify sectors with high employment potential to generate jobs;

ii. Develop projects which target the most vulnerable and marginalized;

iii. Promote subcontracting of services in large scale projects to cooperatives, NGOs and SMMEs owned by members of the local community;

iv. Ensure that public work programmes facilitate sustainable income generation;

v. And encourage public-private partnerships in order to promote productive employment in the formal sector; and

vi. Develop and promote strategic Action Plans, in cooperation with the private sector at national and regional level to generate value addition to primary products.

2.8 Priority Area

Building International cooperation, fair and equitable globalisation and partnerships for an enhanced international support to Africa's efforts towards achieving sustainable development, putting emphasis on the employment agenda, poverty alleviation, regional integration and a better participation in the globalization process;

Objective

To strengthen capacities for Africa to meaningfully participate, contribute to and influence global decision making and evolve a new vision of partnership for employment creation and sustainable development.

Strategies

i. Coordinating efforts between international organizations, bilateral donors and the AU, RECs and Member States;

ii. Strengthening the role of the AU including its NEPAD programme in coordinating policies and having a common position for Africa in global debates; and

iii. Enhancing policy coherence and partnership at the local, national, continental and international levels for a fair globalization.

Recommended Actions

i. Conduct consultations on policy coherence between government, international partners and organization, bilateral and related development partners;

ii. Promote Regional and sub-regional partnership for pooling resources, benchmarking and harmonizing labour markets and learning from cross country experiences;

iii. Press for a greater equity in the current globalization process and international governance system, as it relates to trade, investment, debt and international migration;

iv. Develop and strengthen capacities for Africa develop common positions on international issues; and

v. Institutionalise regular dialogue with international partners with an interest in Africa's development.

2.9 Priority Area

To promote regional and economic cooperation among the Regional Economic Communities RECs in order to expand the

economic space, intra and inter-regional trade, markets and exploit the economies of scale

Objective

To strengthen cooperation of regional economic communities to promote more economic opportunities through harmonisation of labour laws and regulations, establishing mutual recognitions of training and skills development systems, business and investment opportunities

Strategies

i. Strengthening the role of RECs in promoting regional integration, mobilising regional investments and attracting Foreign Investments in the key sectors that generate employment;

ii. Developing an enabling environment at RECs;

iii. Integrating the employment dimension in regional initiatives;

iv. Promoting measures to encourage intra-regional and inter-regional trade amongst African countries; and

v. Promote regional projects in the field of power generation; particularly solar energy, as a means of creating jobs on a regional scale.

Recommended Actions

i. Mainstream employment issues into regional Summits of Head of State and Government level to share experiences;

ii. Collaborate in developing joint investment ventures;

iii. Harmonise labour codes, business laws, fiscal and monetary policies as well as employment policies; and

iv. Implement the continental, intra-regional and inter-regional investment policies.

2.10 Priority Area

Targeting and empowering vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, aged persons, migrants, children, youth and people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis and

Other Related Infectious Diseases, internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants and the working poor

Objective

To ensure that employment and poverty alleviation programmes and policies are targeting vulnerable groups and that their participation in the development, implementation and evaluation processes are promoted at all levels.

Strategies

i. Involving of vulnerable groups in national policy making particularly those of employment creation and poverty alleviation;

ii. Identifying and integrating their needs in policies and programmes through income and food security, affordable social protection, fight against HIV/AIDS and equality of opportunity;

iii. Mainstreaming targeted programmes and formulation of policies and income-generating programmes for the vulnerable groups;

iv. Fighting against child labour and trafficking in humans.

Recommended Actions

i. Extend increased coverage of social protection to the informal sector of the economy;

ii. Mainstream targeted programmes for vulnerable groups ;

iii. Develop and implementation of comprehensive HIV/AIDS programmes;

iv. Develop capacity for institutions targeting vulnerable groups ;

v. Provide financial resources and support services to income generating programmes and projects for the vulnerable groups;

vi. Empowerment through education, skills, training, entrepreneurship, involvement and participation of vulnerable groups;

vii. Establish economically viable cooperative enterprises in the framework in the Framework of the Decade of Cooperatives adopted by the Plan of Action of the Pan African Conference on Cooperatives (Yaounde, 2000).

2.11 Priority Area

Mobilization of resources at national, regional and international levels

Objective

To mobilize sustainable resources for implementation, follow-up, monitoring and evaluation.

Strategies

i. Establishing implementation, follow-up, monitoring and evaluations mechanisms;

ii. Designation of focal points for follow-up activities;

iii. Involving UN Agencies, financial and technical cooperating partners, the private sector and the international community in resource mobilization.

Recommended Actions

i. Designate focal points for follow-up at all levels;

ii. Identify priority programmes on employment and poverty alleviation for possible funding;

iii. Develop projects, plans and programmes for their implementation in consultation with funding partners;

iv. Disseminate the Plan of Action to the concerned stakeholders to ensure implementation;

v. Formulate the required level of resources required and;

vi. Encourage the implementation of G8 Action Plan for Africa.

3. CONCLUSION

The successful and sustained implementation of this Plan of Action requires broad partnerships at Member State, Regional, Continental, and International level. In particular, each Member State is encouraged to forge and sustain partnerships with the Media, non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Trade Union and Employers Organizations, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Faith-based Organisations (FBOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and the private sector. The implementation of the key sectors, identified in the Plan of Action as well as in the NEPAD programme, can with proper environment, strategies, resources and programmes be high potential job creation sectors. Member States are therefore called upon to identify their priorities according to their national conditions and specificities, their development status, as well as their human, financial and national resources and institutional capacities.